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Technology of U.S. Benefits Soviets

Any suggestion that American officials and businessmen helped the Soviet Union invade Afghanistan would raise cries of outrage from the White House and Wall Street alike.

Unfortunately, it happens to be true.

Both the military trucks and the transport jets that disgorged Red Army troops and supplies in Afghanistan during Christmas week were built with the indispensable technological know-how provided by profit-hungry U.S. firms and approved by high-level U.S. officials.

In an incredible replay of pre-Pearl Harbor days, when American businessmen sold the Japanese war machine scrap metal that later rained down on U.S. and allied troops in the Pacific, we have been selling the technically backward Russians U.S. computers and other sophisticated equipment that have enabled the Kremlin to threaten our economic lifeline in the Middle East.

For years, I have warned against the openhanded giveaway of American technology—the one field in which the United States was clearly miles ahead of the Soviet Union. There was one momentary success: A May 24, 1977, column stopped the shipment to Russia of a Control Data computer, which was more than a decade ahead of the Soviets' own technology.

I also published warnings against the sale of other sophisticated equipment to the Russians, including IBM computers. But the warnings were drowned out by eager corporate salesmen and an administration eager to believe the Russians. The CIA has now

learned that the IBM computers were used to build military trucks, which hauled Soviet troops into Afghanistan.

Over the objections of Sen. Henry M. Jackson (D-Wash.) and members of the National Security Council, President Carter personally approved the sale of \$144 million worth of sophisticated equipment, ostensibly to be used by the Soviets for deep-well oil drilling. Experts cautioned that the American machinery could easily be converted to the manufacture of antitank ammunition.

To quiet critics of the deal, Carter appointed a special task force of technological experts, headed by Fred Bucy, chairman of Texas Instruments, to study the sale. But it went through anyway.

According to Dr. Miles Costick of the Institute on Strategic Trade, the Russians also acquired their know-how to build wide-bodied jet transports from American firms. The Soviets' technique was simple: "They kept after the three U.S. aircraft firms bidding on a contract to submit more and more detailed information—until the Russians had enough data to build their own planes."

Costick also said the Soviets went so far as to send their technologists to U.S. plants wearing special shoes that picked up traces of the special alloy metals used in construction of American products.

Armored cars and amphibious vehicles produced at the Gorki automobile plant were built with technical assistance from the Ford Motor Co. Truck chassis used for antiaircraft and anti-

tank guns were made at a factory outfitted by U.S. firms.

Submarine detection devices that make our Trident submarine vulnerable were developed with the help of equipment the Russians bought from Geospace Corp. and Litton Industries.

President Carter personally approved the sale of a Sperry Rand Univac 1100/10C computer the Kremlin had been thirsting after for two years. According to intelligence sources who talked to my reporters Vicki Warren and Mark Zusman, the computer is being used to upgrade the Soviets' Backfire bomber.

The Russians originally wanted a super-Univac, supposedly to help Tass in its coverage of the Olympic Games. Administration advisers warned against the sale. After initially vetoing the Soviets' purchase, Carter okayed the sale of a scaled-down version of the computer.

So to give U.S. businessmen a few lucrative contracts, and to promote the now-shredded hope of detente, the United States has given the communists the one thing they lacked in their arsenal of aggression—American know-how.

Scuttlebucks—The White House is mulling over a proposal by Rep. John Murphy (D-N.Y.) to close all U.S. ports to Soviet merchant ships—an economic sanction that would hit the Russians hard in the pocketbook. A CIA analysis estimates that in 1977, the Soviet merchant fleet earned nearly \$1 billion in hard currency for the Kremlin—second only to the income from oil, gold and timber sales.